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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 331
By Burks

A RESOLUTION to designate May 2003 as "Elder Abuse
Awareness Month" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, every year, more than two million of our disabled and elderly citizens are victims of physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation and are denied many of their rights; and

WHEREAS, abuse of the elderly and people with disabilities in domestic and institutional settings is a widespread problem, affecting hundreds of thousands of people across the country; and

WHEREAS, elder abuse is grossly underreported because elderly people who are being abused find it very difficult to tell anyone, and they are usually ashamed and sometimes afraid; and

WHEREAS, elder abuse happens to men and women of all income levels, all cultural and ethnic groups, whether they are in good health or incapacitated in some way, in poor neighborhoods and in suburbia; and

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WHEREAS, the health and well-being of disabled and elderly people in our State should be one of our highest priorities and of concern to all Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, people who are elderly or who have disabilities have contributed to the general welfare of Tennessee by helping to preserve customs, convictions, and traditions of many people from diverse backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, no aspect of our society—technology, agriculture, science, religion, sports, education—would enjoy its current prominence without contributions from those citizens who are elderly or who have disabilities; and

WHEREAS, we can all benefit from the wisdom and knowledge acquired by Tennesseans who are elderly or who have disabilities; the experience of their past can help our State meet the challenge of its future; and

WHEREAS, people who are elderly or who have disabilities are among the most important resources of our State, and it is fitting that we recognize the need to protect their health, safety, and rights; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the month of May 2003 is hereby designated "Elder Abuse Awareness Month" in Tennessee. We urge all citizens to work together in the years to come to help reduce abuse and neglect of people who are elderly or who have disabilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.